

"Scotland, Jersey and Guernsey." Here we have the *fact* that a man of ability believed in a power that could not have existed.

A proof of the fallacy of asserted *facts* in medical experience is found in the history of the "*Weapon Ointment*," and the "*Sympathetic Powder*."

The "*Weapon Ointment*" was said to be composed of "portions of mummy," of "human blood," and of the "moss from the skull of a thief hung in chains." It was used for healing wounds. The injured part was washed and dressed, and the weapon, or a facsimile of it, with which the wound was inflicted, was anointed with the unguent.

Fabricus Hildanus, one of the best surgeons of the time, could not resist the solemn assertions respecting its efficacy, and yielded a reluctant belief in the facts. Lord Bacon who wrote upon the subject, also exhibited a partial belief.

The "*Sympathetic Powder*" composed of "powdered blue vitriol," was applied to the blood stained garments of a wounded person, to cure his injuries, even though the sufferer was miles away. Sir Kenelm Digby procured the recipe from a Friar, who brought it from the East about the middle of the 17th century, and soon had an opportunity for testing its virtue upon his friend Mr. Howel. It is said: "That four days after he received his wounds, Sir Kenelm dipped one of Howel's garters in a solution of the powder, and immediately, the wounds which were very painful, grew easy, although the patient, who was conversing in the corner of the chamber, had not the least idea what was doing with his garter. He then returned home leaving his garter in the hands of Sir Kenelm, who had hung it up to dry, when Mr. Howel sent his servant in a great hurry to tell him that his wounds were paining him horribly, the garter was therefore replaced in the solution of the powder, and the patient got well after five or six days of its continued immersion."

King James the First, his son Charles the First, the Duke of Buckingham, then Prime Minister, and all the principal personages of the time, were cognisant of this fact; and James himself being curious to know the secret of this remedy, asked it of Sir Kenelm who revealed it to him, and His Majesty had an opportunity of making several trials of its efficacy, all which succeeded in a surprising manner." Doubtless the above statements were taken as *facts* to prove an absurdity.

The rise and fall of the *Tar water*, so urgently recommended by Bishop Berkely, is an illustration that however wise, learned, and honest a man may be, it does not necessarily follow that he can reason wisely upon a medical subject. This great and good man